

§ 23.9 What must an entity to which National Health Service Corps personnel are assigned (i.e., a National Health Service Corps site) charge for the provision of health services by assigned personnel?

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, individuals receiving services from assigned National Health Service Corps personnel must be charged on a fee-for-service or other basis at a rate which is computed to permit recovery of the value of the services and is approved by the Secretary.

(b) In determining whether to approve fees to be charged for health services, the Secretary will consider: The costs to the National Health Service Corps of providing the health services; the costs to the health manpower shortage area for providing the services; and the charges for similar services by other practitioners or facilities in or nearby the health manpower shortage area. However, if assigned National Health Service Corps personnel are providing services within the framework of an established health services delivery system, the Secretary may approve the fees charged under that system without regard to the foregoing factors.

(c)(1) No charge or a nominal charge will be made for health services provided by assigned National Health Service Corps personnel to individuals within the health manpower shortage area with annual incomes at or below the “CSA Income Poverty Guidelines” (45 CFR 1060.2). However, no individual will be denied health services based upon inability to pay for the services. Any individual who has an annual income above the “CSA Income Poverty Guidelines,” but whose income does not exceed 200 percent of the CSA levels, will receive health services at a nominal charge. However, charges will be made for services to the extent that payment will be made by a third party which is authorized or under legal obligation to pay the charges.

(2) The provisions of this paragraph also apply with respect to services provided by an individual who is fulfilling an NHSC scholarship obligation under section 753 or who received a special grant under section 755.

§ 23.10 Under what circumstances may a National Health Service Corps site’s reimbursement obligation to the Federal Government be waived?

(a) The Secretary may waive in whole or in part the reimbursement requirements of section 334(a)(3) of the Act if he determines that:

(1) The National Health Service Corps site is financially unable to meet the reimbursement requirements or that compliance with those requirements will unreasonably limit the ability of the site to adequately support the provision of services by assigned Corps personnel. In making these determinations, the Secretary will consider—

(i) The costs necessary to adequately support the health services provided by the assigned National Health Service Corps personnel and the income and financial resources available to meet the costs;

(ii) The ability of the applicant to obtain credit from suppliers, lending institutions, private organizations and individuals;

(iii) The need of the health manpower shortage area for health services; and

(iv) The extent to which the National Health Service Corps site utilizes health professions personnel.

(2) A significant percentage of the individuals who are located in the health manpower shortage area and are receiving the health services of the assigned National Health Service Corps personnel are elderly, living in poverty, or have other characteristics which indicate an inability to pay. For purposes of this section, “elderly” means persons 65 years or older and the “CSA Income Poverty Guidelines” will be used as the standard for determining whether individuals are living in poverty. Other characteristics indicating inability to pay include, but are not to be limited to, the ratio of unemployment in the health manpower shortage area and the area’s cost-of-living index.

(b) The Secretary may waive in whole or in part the reimbursement requirements of section 334(f)(1) of the Act if he or she determines that the National Health Service Corps site is a small health center (as defined by section 334(f)(5) of the Act) that needs all